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Executive Recipient

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September 29, 1975

STAT



Thank you very much for your recent letter with its assessment of the refugee resettlement program. With your background, of course, an assessment has special value because of your past experience in this field. I have forwarded your comments to the appropriate authorities here, where I am sure your evaluation will be appreciated.

Please accept my continued best wishes for your future and my hope that you do find work here in the United States appropriate to your high qualifications.

With best regards.

Sincerely,

/s/ W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby
Director

WEC:lm (26 Sept 75)

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H. E. William Colby
Director
Central Intelligence Agency

Excellency,

I came here to work at [redacted] My short-term STAT
contract with ICEM has ended. However I am still in

STAT

Through different channels I received news from Saigon.
The North Vietnamese Communists still wonder why they
are not welcome in the South as they were told in Hanoi.
Fighting is still going on in the Hoa Hoa areas, in Camau,
in Long Khanh and Phan Thiet. In and around Saigon
itself the situation is insecure and on the other side
of the Saigon River the curfew is imposed at 7 P.M.
I wish to see you some time in the near future.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely

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With best regards August 1975

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REFUGEE PROGRAM ASSESSED BY A REFUGEE

by

STAT



The first phase of the refugee program can be considered completed. In spite of its shortcomings this program has achieved much in less than 4 months, starting last May, with the dedicated cooperation of the military camps in the Pacific islands and continental USA, the Indo-China Interagency Task Force, the Voluntary Agencies and innumerable private American citizens and the Indo-Chinese refugees themselves. The following is an assessment of the program by a refugee who has been in daily contact with tens of thousands of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees in and out of camps in the USA in recent months.

I. REFUGEE PROGRAM'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Not all the people anxious to leave Indo-China were evacuated. The evacuation of 135,000 refugees including mostly Vietnamese with 3,000 Cambodians under extremely confusing conditions represented, however, a remarkable feat.

Well Organized Camps

There has been very little complaint regarding living conditions in the refugee camps in the Pacific islands of Guam and Wake and in the four refugee sites in the continental United States. Shelters were comfortable, whether it was the concrete buildings in Wake Island, the barracks at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas or the temporary tents and

quonset huts at Pendleton and other camps. Wherever and whenever it was cold, enough jackets and blankets were distributed to the refugees along with mattresses and sheets. The Red Cross and other Voluntary Agencies and private citizens brought plenty of clothes for everyone and all the refugees looked well dressed. Sanitation was adequate. Medical and dental care was available at in-camp clinics. The more serious cases were treated in well-equipped hospitals. The food, though different from what the refugees had been used to at home, was satisfactory. Three meals were served each day with more rice, pork and fish than at American usual meals and they were sometimes prepared with the assistance of Vietnamese culinary experts. While adults had problems getting adapted, the children switched to the new food style in no time.

There were well-organized religious services for Buddhists, Catholics and Protestants. There were also playschools for children and there were for adults, English classes, driving lessons, American life orientation courses. Film shows, artistic performances, athletic and other recreational events were often organized with the participation of Boy Scouts, student associations and other private groups.

The most often voiced complaint was that the refugees were strictly confined to the camps until they were processed out, which did not help make them feel free nor give them a chance to learn about their new social environment and look themselves for job opportunities. However, from a practical point of view, letting the refugees free to move in and out would make it impossible to run such huge reception centers as Fort Chaffee or Camp Pendleton with tens of thousands of refugees. Lodging and

food repartition, immigration processing, medical examination, meetings with voluntary agencies, appointments with sponsors, etc. would be extremely hard to organize. There would also be refugees melting in the surrounding landscape without the responsible services being in any position to know their whereabouts, good or misfortunes, successes or failures and needs.

On the other hand, there need be no fears that the refugees might be tempted to stay indefinitely in the camps. They are strongly work-oriented and are anxious to stand on their own feet and become economically self-supporting. They also realize that they are late comers and the economy is not booming. They are willing to take harder with lower pay jobs which are not generally wanted and they are ready to go to places which have less appeal to earlier comers, adopting as principle that home is where business is. It is also generally understood that no matter ~~who~~ ^{how} well organized camp life may be materially, it is never pleasant to line up for food and gaze idly at lonely hills day in and day out and that placement and resettlement represent# the more important part of the refugee program.

Group Versus Individual Sponsorship

The refugee camps in Guam and Wake islands are now practically empty. Five thousand refugees went to third countries, sometimes as far-flung as Australia and Norway, Saudi-Arabia and Senegal, West Germany and the Ivory Coast. But it was mainly to France and especially Canada which has been running a successful resettlement

program for refugees with or without relatives in Canada. The refugee movements to third countries, except for Canada, were ably coordinated and handled through the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration.

Another 1,000 refugees are waiting for repatriation to South Vietnam to rejoin their families. The rest, about 139,000, have come over to continental United States. More than 60 percent of these have been processed out of the four resettlement sites, Pendleton in California, Elgin in Florida, Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania. It was all achieved through the sponsorship system.

Church groups proved to be the best organized and most efficient sponsors. They have placed, through their dioceses, parishes and other local chapters, tens of thousands of refugees including large-sized families with 10 or more members.

Contrary to unjustified criticisms, the church organizations such as the United States Catholic Conference, the Church World Service, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, etc., are not making profits out of the resettlement operation. Local transportation, housing and food, clothing and furniture, job interviews and other items necessary for the resettlement of the refugees will far exceed the \$500 per capita allocated by public funds. Private contributions in cash and in kind within the churches will make up for the difference.

The other voluntary agencies, the International Rescue Committee, the Tolstoy Foundation, the United HIAS Service, the American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, were no less efficient though handling a more limited number of cases.

The individual sponsors were less successful in carrying out their responsibilities even through the mediation and coordination of a voluntary agency. Most sponsors are able to provide the refugees with housing and food for a few days or weeks. Supporting them for longer periods of time and providing them with jobs, represents a more difficult endeavor. On the other hand, contacts between sponsors and refugees were not always well prepared. More often than not they did not know what to expect exactly of one another; consequently, their later relations were sometimes strained to a breaking point.

The number of resettlement failures is not known with accuracy nor is it simple to agree on any definition of failure. How much money, time and effort should be spent on a case before it could be so labeled? There will not be two similar answers. However, it is now common to talk of breakdown and failure each time a refugee, after being processed out of camp, goes on social welfare. It is recently disclosed by California's Social Welfare Services that 41 percent of the 15,700 Vietnamese refugees now living in the state are receiving some form of assistance, welfare, MediCal or food stamps and that the figure is expected to rise to 75 percent. The reading of such percentages could not lead to any conclusion unless there are further and more detailed data on each type of service received. On the other hand, it would be normal to expect that newly resettled refugees, even in relatively successful cases, would temporarily need some type of medical assistance.

II. THE HARD CORD REFUGEES

The resettlement program is gradually closing in on the classically called hard-core refugees. There are still about 60,000 in-camp refugees. They can be roughly divided into three groups of nearly equal numeric importance: soldiers, fishermen and farmers, small business people, and government and private employees of middle and low ranks. Most of them speak little or no English and have never been abroad before. They have very large sized families and have practically nothing but the clothes on their backs.

On the other hand, the number of sponsors is declining. Many in the previous groups of refugees had relatives and friends in the United States who acted as their ready sponsors to help them out of the camps. There are no more such sponsors, the still in-camp refugees having no personal acquaintances in the United States and relying entirely on the voluntary agencies for sponsorship. But even this source of sponsors mobilized by the Voluntary Agencies is drying up, partly because the refugee novelty has worn off and refugee stories appear less frequently in newspapers.

Church groups and other Voluntary Agencies are making systematic efforts to keep the refugee issue alive and mobilize new sponsors within their own organizations. Their appeal, no longer catching the newspaper headlines, has reached out to more dioceses, parishes and local chapters where many more of the good common American people will get involved in helping resettle the refugees. The group sponsorship process, after the present slowing down, has therefore good chance of picking up momentum again.

Individual sponsorship could also become more efficient by adopting a more direct and pragmatic approach. Good will and compassion do exist. However, for the individual sponsorship process to expand and play a more meaningful role, it should also be based on two-way cooperation and mutual benefit. This has not been the case. There have been, consequently, misunderstandings and maladjustment.

If the sponsor is at the same time employer, in a position to provide the refugee with a stable job at the very beginning, that will be the best. If this is not the case, the interim period during which the refugee is assisted by the sponsor should be considered the transition time of a temporary job with both sides and also the mediating Voluntary Agency knowing what kind of assistance the refugee could expect from the sponsor and what kind of services, including home services, the sponsor could in return expect from the refugee. If, during this interim period, in addition to food and lodging, the refugee receives some pay for his services, that will represent a valuable assistance and a fair deal, a real good sponsorship to the satisfaction of both sides.

The trade unions and professional organizations could also work alongside the Voluntary Agencies and play a significant role.

The AFL-CIO under the leadership of George Meany strongly supported the cause of the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees. Mr. George Meany is also a member of the Advisory Committee to President Ford on Indo-China refugees. The AFL-CIO with their community services could do much to help place the refugees according to their professional skills. It would be desirable to have them open office at the refugee camps. They could

place many refugees, especially in the farms and the fishing industries with labor shortage.

Some professional groups have organized committees for refugee relief and resettlement. The journalists and radio and television correspondents have organized the Correspondents' Committee for Refugee Relief (CCRR) located at the Cox Newspapers Washington Bureau in Washington, D. C. with the participation of many influential newspapers, magazines, press agencies, radio and television companies. The CCRR has set forth comprehensive tentative programs to act as a job clearing house, to sponsor university fellowships and training in the English language and American culture and to start an apprenticeship program in journalism and related trades. There are about 100 Vietnamese journalists who are refugees in the United States. The CCRR could assist them in their professional resettlement, especially place them with various newspapers and magazines in the Asian news or editorial sections where their experience in Asian affairs could represent a useful contribution.

A most significant program to help nearly 300 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee doctors qualify for medical practice in the United States is being implemented by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare with the cooperation of the American Medical Association. HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger said; "The physicians helped by this program will be encouraged to practice in underserved areas of the country." They will undoubtedly go to those underserved areas where their services will be needed. They in turn will be in a position to sponsor other

Vietnamese and Cambodian medical professionals, dentists, nurses, midwives, etc.

The participation of American professional groups in the refugee resettlement program could expand and cover other professions, each professional group assisting especially its Vietnamese and Cambodian counterparts.

States and cities could also play a much greater role. Washington State has been carrying out an outstanding resettlement program. Its target set up first at 500 refugees was later raised to cover 500 more. The project was not limited to professionals and skilled workers; it was also extended to the unskilled workers. Instructions were given to take a cross section of the refugee population. This project which is still going on and implies some type of vocational training is very popular with the refugees.

If other states and cities participate in the resettlement program in the same way as Washington State, many more refugees will be satisfactorily and productively resettled.

The sunny and warm days are drawing to an end. It will soon be chilly and uncomfortable under the temporary tents open to winds and rains in Eglin, Pendleton and Indiantown Gap. By that time there might still be too many refugees to be all squeezed into the more comfortable barracks at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas. Building new barracks and setting up new camps might not be the best solution. Maybe it is time to entrust the Voluntary Agencies, the states and cities with greater responsibilities and have them organize reception centers for groups of 100 or more refugees.

This will generate more active participation from local churches, businesses and service groups. On the other hand what could not be applied to big refugee camps with tens of thousands of refugees will become feasible: the refugees will be free to move in and out of smaller reception centers for contact with the local communities, meetings with would-be sponsors, job interviews, etc., thereby multiplying manyfold their contact surface with American society and making their integration easier and faster.

This has already received a beginning of implementation. Besides Washington State which took 1,000 refugees to Seattle under its direct responsibility, Food for the Hungry organized the Weimar Hope Village near Sacramento to receive about 500 refugees and the International Rescue Committee set up Cameo House in Los Angeles for a growing number of refugee families. These initiatives proved to be pragmatic and successful, worthwhile carrying out on a larger scale.

About 500 Vietnamese air pilots and 10,000 naval soldiers left Vietnam with their air and seacrafts and contributed to the success of the evacuation operation. Most of them are still in camp. They will be difficult to place having no other professional skills ~~other~~ than their military formation. It is encouraging for them to learn that they can now enlist in the USA armed forces. Their immigration status should be adjusted accordingly. This single measure would go a long way in solving the refugee problem.

III. GROUP RESETTLEMENT

After every effort will have been made by Voluntary Agencies, individual sponsors, professional groups, states and cities to resettle the refugees individually, there will still remain in camp a hard-core of refugees comprising mainly farmers, fishermen and small business people. This hard-core can be estimated at 30,000. The choice will then narrow down to three alternatives: 1) keeping them in camp indefinitely ; 2) transferring them to social welfare with no end in sight and 3) organizing group resettlement. The two first alternatives can hardly be retained as solutions. Some form of group resettlement will have to be considered. Some sort of Vietnamese communities, Vietnamese villages will have to be organized, based mainly on farming and fishing.

Every group of refugees or immigrants tended to cluster together, at least during the first generation or the first few years. This helped them maintain their cultural identity and gave them a greater sense of security. This also led to a well-balanced community where all available skills could be put to use, thereby achieving full employment for the refugees within the shortest time and making it possible for the elderly people to have a normal and useful life while individual resettlement in a new social environment would make them feel completely uprooted.

On the other hand the farmers and fishermen, sometimes labeled unskilled workers, are highly skilled in their own ways. Their traditional experience and knowledge in farming and fishing which usually have been upgraded and updated by contact with modern technology could be mobilized

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to the fullest extent for achieving the group resettlement projects to the benefit of both the refugees and their host countries.

The Vietnamese fishermen besides being expert in fishing are equally experienced in fish breeding, especially "under-raft fish breeding" which consists in breeding fish in enclosures fitted under a boat so that the natural flow of the rivers bring in and out water and food and the fish breeder has only to provide his fish with limited additional food supplies. They also have experience in fish processing, especially manufacturing of fish sauce.

The Vietnamese farmers are all-rounded farmers with experience in growing rice, corn, manioc, soya beans, fruit trees and other tropical fruits crops.

Fishermen become self-supporting almost overnight after they are provided with fishing boats and fishing equipment. Farmers become self-supporting after they harvest their first crops.

To organize a group resettlement based on farming, the first problem to solve is land. The average farm size per family will be 5 to 10 hectares. The fishermen will receive less, an average of 2 hectares per family to grow secondary crops during the months they are not fishing.

The area available for group resettlement will have to be mapped out and surveyed especially regarding soil quality, water resources and crops which could be grown.

The infrastructure, mainly roads and bridges, opening access to the land will have to be designed. It will be simple and kept within

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the limits of financial resources available.

A visit to the area will then be scheduled for a few representatives selected by the refugees themselves. Upon their acceptance, the resettlement site will be prepared regarding land clearing, temporary shelters, drinking water system and sanitation, while the refugees get organized into groups ready for departure.

Not mentioning the cost of the land, budget provisions will have to cover the following basic items:

- setting up of the infrastructure opening access to the resettlement site
- land clearing, temporary shelters, drinking water and sanitation at the resettlement site
- transportation of the refugees to the resettlement site
- food support for one year
- building of housing units, each unit having a plot for garden
- farming and fishing allowances
- community services including clinic, school and market place

Many of these items are already included in the organization of refugee camps with the basic difference that while the refugees idle away their time in the camps, they will work and produce at the resettlement site, become self-supporting, contribute new economic and cultural ingredients to the host country into which they will gradually and smoothly integrate.

Group resettlement is the deep wish of many Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees who are still in camp wondering and worrying about their uncertain and unknown future.

V-1 25 Mar '75

DCI/DDCI

Routing Slip

Executive Registry
75-5322

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1	DCI			11	LC		
2	DDCI			12	IG		
3	S/MC			13	Compt		
4	DDS&T			14	Asst/DCI		
5	DDI			15	AO/DCI		
6	DDM&S			16	Ex/Sec		
7	DDO			17	C/EA	V	X
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To Ambassador William Colby,
Director of CIA, with best
memories and kindest regards

Sugor 25 Feb 1975



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Routing Slip

75-5323/1

TO:

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3	S/MC			13	Compt		
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5	DDI			15	AO/DCI		
6	DDA AS			16	Ex/Sec		
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